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The Withdrawal of the Major European Powers from Africa

by

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UNSCRAMBLING THE COLONIAL EGG

We are accustomed to read in the history books of the expansion of Europe into Asia and Africa, of the deeds of the great explorers, missionaries and pioneers. What I propose to do in this series of talks is to consider the opposite process, the contraction or withdrawal of the major European powers from Africa south of the Sahara.

Withdrawal in the way which I see it ought not to be seen rather emotionally as "retreat," but perhaps as "disengagement." There has been little systematic thought given to Europe's disengagement from Africa; such a process does not have the adventure or heroism associated with empire-building.

I think you will agree that this is a vast and complex subject, so I have decided to restrict myself to looking at one aspect of the problem, namely, the effect which this disengagement or withdrawal has had upon the mental outlook of the Great Powers concerned. We might, in fact, call this psychological politics.

I have set myself the task of finding out how the various Great Powers have adjusted themselves to their new role in the post-colonial world. Do they feel embittered, frustrated or guilty now that their old Empires have largely passed away? Are they richer or poorer, happier, or do they long for the faded glory of their Imperial past? In trying to answer these questions my main concern will be with Britain, France and Belgium (Holland's main interest has been in Asia, in Indonesia), and the Portuguese have not in truth "disengaged" themselves in the sense in which I speak.

Speaking, perhaps, tongue in cheek, the economist, Professor J. K. Galbraith (no dismal scientist he), argued the other day that Britain has suffered from what he calls the "area fallacy" or "acreage syndrome". The British were possessed of a red-paint psyche, I suppose you might call it; the more of the world map painted red the better for the world. The French, I suppose, on this logic, could be happy only if Africans and Asians grew up as model Frenchmen, stamped in the image of Descartes, writing French poetry. Galbraith's point is Disraeli's point; colonies are "millstones round the neck" of the colonial power.

The analysis, however, overlooks one important consideration, namely, the fairly new notion that the richer countries in the

world have a "duty" to assist the developing nations. The idea of assistance to economically under-developed countries has become a part of every good major power's budget. It has become a subject in itself. In Britain, somewhat characteristically, the first step in this direction was made in the depth of a slump and the height of a war. The Colonial Development and Welfare Acts date from 1929 and 1940; in 1940 Britain spent £5.5 million on colonial development. In 1965-66 British Government aid was running at over £200 million, half in grants and half in loans. The French too have now accepted the principle of economic assistance. In 1959 the French set up the *Fonds d'Investissement pour le Développement Economique et Sociale* and a special fund for Africa, the *Fonds d'Aide et de Coopération*. France, like the Soviet Union and China, spends 2 per cent. per year; thirty to forty-five billion dollars a year are needed; today the total volume of international aid is about six billion. Moreover, aid can sometimes be wiped out, as happened, for example, between 1955 and 1959, when Africa lost twice as much as she received in external aid through falls in world price of raw materials. Withdrawal, I would suggest, in terms of these vast sums which the developed countries are called upon to provide, does not mean economic withdrawal; it means no more than the signs and the trappings of political sovereignty.

Profitable or not, the Great Powers had little notion of any disengagement from Africa until the mid 'fifties. Even during World War II the colonies were not generally thought to come within the meaning of the Atlantic Charter. Churchill's notorious claim that he had not become His Majesty's first minister in order to preside over the dissolution of the British Empire has been often referred to, but frequently people lose sight of the fact that Mr. Attlee's Labour Government made no reference to the coming independence of the British colonies in its policies, as Sir Seretse Khama of Botswana and others might ruefully testify.

As late as 1954 a member of the British Government could say in the House of Commons that it had always been understood that "certain territories in the Commonwealth could not expect to be fully independent". Yet between 1950 and 1960 ten African territories became independent, and then followed 1960, "Africa's Year", as it was called, in which no fewer than eighteen States, mainly in French West Africa, gained independence. Now African independent States are no novelty.

One might very reasonably ask why the granting of independence was made so recently and so suddenly. There are two major reasons and I propose to devote a lecture to each of these; the first one might be termed "ethical" and the second might be regarded as "political". The first involves a changing climate

of opinion and the second involves pressures of a political nature, what the Germans call *realpolitik*.

If we ask ourselves why initially Europe involved itself in Africa we see that the economic factor (search for raw materials or for new markets) is highly important. Yet as the European powers vacated their colonies, no attempt was made to terminate trading links which took many Europeans to Africa in the first place. This is not to assert that the economic factor is all-important; the Bible, the gun and the strings of beads all went together unselfconsciously. The "string of beads" so beloved of one school of "romantic" writers? Giles the cartoonist depicted the old colonial surrounded by pictures, trophies, tusks and lions' heads. An ardent young G.I., courting the ex-Governor's daughter, is seen to ask: "But surely, Sir, you took it all for a handful of beads?"

There is the germ of a point here. The apoplectic expression on the Governor's face suggests that string of beads or not, economics or not, Empire-building and Empire-destroying was a highly emotional affair. Symbols have always meant so much to men; flags, badges, regimental colours, national anthems, national animals. Decolonisation involved the removal of political symbols like the monarchy, the flag of the colonial power, the garden party and the invention of new symbols, animals and songs. Apart from these externals, little appeared to be changed as the colonial egg was unscrambled. Religion, language, custom remained as the Governor went. What indeed was handed over to the new rulers in so many of these countries? They have been satisfied to receive only one thing, the most tangible and indefinable of political concoctions, that which we call political sovereignty. Political sovereignty, the mystique of independence, was a political string of beads. Yet it is the ultimate in political status symbols and involves membership of the General Assembly of the United Nations. To the political scientist, then, the disengagement process is of great interest because it fixes our gaze upon the continuing attachment of men to symbols to loyalties, so much so that the removal of even a royal figurehead or a functionless Governor-General may be regarded as of great significance.

Beneath this intangible process lay another intangible movement, national self-determination, a concept which had developed in Europe through the rhetoric of Rousseau and Kant and the reality of the French Revolution. With Woodrow Wilson, national self-determination became conventional wisdom. National self-determination does not necessarily lead to stability. In Latin America the latter still eludes politicians one hundred and fifty years after the great age of emancipation.

African nationalism appears to be both wider and narrower than its European counterpart. In Europe the unitary nation-state was characteristic, a Poland or an Italy. African nationalism, on the other hand, is frequently tribal and nothing else; sometimes it transcends the mere tribe and becomes linked up with various "pan" movements—vague wide cultural affiliations including poetic fantasies like existentialism and *négritude*. Take the Gold Coast for example. Only in 1901 did it become a single unit, and Nigeria not until 1914. On the other hand, the Upper Volta was detached from the Ivory Coast in 1919 and dismembered in 1932. Britain aimed at making nation-states like Poland or Italy and then depart.

Moreover, African nationalism has not yet finished evolving. What colonial powers experienced (and for the large part did not like) was *élite* nationalism, that is a nationalism built around some powerful westernised African figure, an Nkrumah, a Kenyatta, a Leopold Senghor. Out of this emerged mass nationalism in which the new leaders were forced to justify themselves to the masses beneath. Some leaders (helped by British and French troops) held off the challenge, as in East Africa in 1964 and Gabon in 1965. Leaders fell and are falling and the army, much to the relief of many people, took over. Whereas the original post-colonial leader found his spiritual home in the London School of Economics, the new military rulers are graduates of Sandhurst and their equivalents. Out of the thirty-eight member States of the Organisation of African Unity, the heads of about a dozen States are military men.

Despite the process of disengagement of colonies from the mother country, then, strong emotional attachments do remain. While wishing to break away, the colonials frequently cling to colonial values and attitudes in truly remarkable fashion. This was suggested as long ago as 1915, when a young Indian in South Africa named Gandhi said, "I discovered that the British Empire had certain ideals with which I have fallen in love". Moreover, French elegance is evident in the writings of Senghor or the style of a Keita, and sometimes one sees in the wealthy westernised Indian a caricature of one of Victoria's pro-consuls. The West African law student moves easily about the Inns of Court in London looking the very epitome of the successful barrister.

There are gains and there are losses. Withdrawal of the metropolitan power has frequently been a bad thing for the ex-colony's political cohesion, governmental stability and legal certainty; but at least they must now squarely accept responsibility for their own particular mess. Speaking many years ago about the British Empire, Smuts once said, "Forms and formulas may still have to be adjusted, but the real work is done". He could little have realised that the adjustment of forms and for-

mulas would eventually lead to the unscrambling of the colonial egg itself.

BRITISH DECOLONISATION: THE ETHICAL PROBLEM

Many centuries ago Aristotle pointed out the close connection between political science and ethics. As soon as a so-called "political" question came to be discussed, there was raised a question of its rightness or wrongness.

Dealing with a subject like colonisation or decolonisation, it is clear that people instinctively react to these very words, sometimes violently for, sometimes violently against. Moral evaluations appear to grow out of ideas which in themselves are necessarily neither good nor bad. We know what the pioneer colonials thought and we are treated *ad nauseam* to diatribes by the decolonisers on the evils of colonialism. What I intend to do in this talk is to describe the ethical problems involved in the decolonising process. The ethic or *ethos* from which colonialism developed was an *ethos* very different from which it has since departed. This point is quite fundamental and must be made at the outset. There is nothing so sad as to see the worst aspects of one age compared with the best of another.

In the great days of expansion the superiority of the West was never seen as a mere question of economics. This superiority in the nineteenth century was viewed as absolute, quite unself-consciously without any sense of shame or guilt. Civilisation involved *all* the Victorian ethical tenets and the piety of a Livingstone, the unscrupulousness of the trader and the derring-do of the soldier of the Queen went together in one untidy package deal. There was no conscious hypocrisy; superiority was understood. What Europe had to offer was seen as unquestionably better than anything which it replaced. Macaulay could confidently assert, without any trace of jingoism, that "a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia". It was consequently a highminded England which in the last century set about the colonising of Africa.

Ruskin said of his country, ". . . she must find colonies as fast and as far as she is able"; Rhodes, putting the matter even more bluntly, maintained, "the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race". Economic expansion was an ethical expansion and vice versa. "These islands", said Rhodes, "can only support 6 million out of their 36 million. We cannot afford to part with one inch of the world's surface which affords a free and open market to the manufactures of our countrymen."

In 1883 the Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge University, Seeley, urged young men to go East and West;

"... it is only necessary to take possession of boundless territories in Canada, South Africa and Australia where already our language is spoken, our religion professed and our laws established. If there is pauperism in Wiltshire and Dorsetshire, this is but complementary to wealth in Australia. On the one side there are men without property; on the other there is property waiting for men".

Kipling taught the English to think of the poetry of Empire. From its hallowed centre of Westminster—"where the Abbey makes us we"—to the fringed palm and the snow-capped fort at the outer circumference, the Empire was a vast trust for humanity. The White Man's Burden "constituted the peculiar contribution to human progress of the Anglo-Saxon race. Moral purpose was evident in all this; something of its fervour might be perhaps conveyed to you as you watch the film of *Khartoum*. Colonial expansion was the fashion of the age. In the nineties no one could resist its compulsion; so much so that in 1893, when Gladstone wished to withdraw (the choice of the word is deliberate) from Uganda, he was warned by his chief election agent that the price for so doing would be his own withdrawal from Downing Street.

Victoria was Empress, ruler and mistress over palm and pine; the sun never set upon the British Empire. Forty-six years after her death her great-grandson, Lord Louis Mountbatten, was to complete the transfer of all the paraphernalia of Empire into the hands of Indian subjects of the Empire. Born in the sunset of that great era, nurtured in its Edwardian afterglow, maturing in the harsh new age of total war, Mountbatten was, like so many twentieth century Britons, to fight against Victoria's own German kinsfolk and see the King cease to be Emperor of India and become, rather prosaically, Head of the Commonwealth.

Writing in 1948, one conservative authority asserted that "the King needs no unwilling subjects". During the 1950's colonialism became the commonest term of abuse in half the world. The Russians used it with deadly skill for their own purposes; it upset the consciences of the most anglophile of Americans, and even the Germans looked virtuously down their noses at the mention of colonies, thanking God that they were not like other people. The word was a curse on the lips of millions of Africans and Asians.

A decade ago the reputation of British colonialism reached rockbottom. One writer, Richard Pares, writing in 1957, asked, almost in despair: "What answer are we to make to the revolt of three-quarters of the world against colonialism? Obviously we shall not say to the liberated peoples: 'Come and stamp on us for a hundred and fifty years; then we shall be all square and

you will feel better'." Recent events in Africa, however, have helped to rescue Britain's reputation.

In the nineteenth century Britain had shown a considerable gift for timing when they granted responsible government (as independence was called in the last century); Canada is a case in point. Controversy has raged rather irrelevantly over the problem of *status* rather than timing; is it an Empire, a Commonwealth, with Dominions, Crown Colonies, Protectorates? All these are perhaps false problems. What was important was to know or to sense that notice had been given to quit.

The great colonial days were days in which power and morality went together; the declining years were years during which Britain still had the reins of power, but had lost the absolute sense of righteousness. The ethos had changed.

An indication of the departed ethic may be drawn from India, the withdrawal from which set in motion many of the decolonising tendencies. There appeared to be no solution suitable except a complete withdrawal, as Wavell advocated. The mission of Sir Stafford Cripps in 1943 foundered on dissension between Hindus and Moslems. Local communal clashes were rapidly reaching a dangerous stage and augured an all-out conflict between the warring communities. King George VI agreed to send Mountbatten to liquidate British rule in India after three centuries. There is no more dramatic example of the renunciation of imperial and colonial power ever known. On 22nd March, 1947, just twenty years ago, in the traditional pomp and splendour, Britain disengaged herself from India, from rule over 200 million Hindus, 100 million Moslems and Sikhs, 50 million members of the Depressed Classes and 80 million inhabitants of the Princely States. Mountbatten, the last Viceroy, whose Court was more splendid than that of the King in England, told the Indian people: "We are a great nation, but we can no longer rule you. . . ."

In the next few years it was to become clearer and clearer that the British had "lost the will to govern". This very phrase occurred, for example, in the course of a discussion between Mr. Duncan Sandys and Sir Roy Welensky at the time of the break-up of the Central African Federation. Did this mean that the British were no longer the men that their fathers were, or that they had become decadent, soft, molly-coddled in their Welfare State, snug and smug in their tight little island? Walter Lippman suggested a different interpretation. Writing in the *Washington Post* of the withdrawal from India, he declared: "Britain's finest hour is not in the past. Certainly this performance is not the work of a decadent people . . . it is the work of political genius requiring the ripest wisdom and the freshest vigour, and

it is done with an elegance and a style that will compel and receive an instinctive respect throughout the civilised world."

Lippmann's assessment may perhaps go too far in the other direction. More telling arguments were perhaps that Britain could not have held India by force. Britain could only have continued to rule India by means of a large army of occupation and possibly four years' National Service for British young men and a crushing financial burden.

Colonial expansion in the 1880's was for the British an ethical categorical imperative; by 1947 colonialism was ethically out of court. In Africa it had another ten years to last. All these developments had an important effect upon Britain itself, upon the British national psyche.

There have been two sorts of reactions in Britain. Most people, concerned with everyday island problems, the ordinary Englishman, for example, devoting his Sunday morning to washing his Ford Zodiac (?) or Jaguar (?) (a truly Anglican sacrament), could not be said to be particularly interested one way or the other. The B.B.C. reported an excellent example of parochial "Little-England-ism" during a talk given on television by the then Prime Minister, Mr. Macmillan. Apparently, when he turned from home affairs and asked "What about abroad?" 100,000 viewers switched off their television sets. As the Empire faded away there appear to have been few of the popular media to shore it up, with one notable exception in the *Daily Express* of Lord Beaverbrook, for whom Empire was the most sacred of all sacred cows.

Even more astonishing perhaps was the point made by Richard Hoggart in his examination of the *Uses of Literacy*! which he established the fact that most of the members of the British working class were unaware that Britain's colonial empire was disappearing or that Britain was anything but a Major Imperial Power. It had taken a long time for Rhodes' message to percolate through to the lower segments of British society, and when it did the Empire had gone. *Sic transit gloria mundi*.

The second, more informed, reaction to decolonisation may be found also. We note that those who were better informed tended either to welcome or to reject the cracking of the colonial egg. The passing of Empire was welcomed by Fabians who had worked for this demise and condemned by Conservatives who had worked against it.

The burning moral purpose of eighty years back is no more; the passion to convert, trade and explore which took the British to Africa exists no longer. The ethical canons of today are different as we well know. In the unlovely jargon of American

political science, the world is beset by contrary ideologies of which we hear neo-colonialism (whatever that might mean) is one of the worse. But for the plainer man, the truth is simply that the simple burning imperial faith has vanished along with the other characteristic impediments of the later Victorian era—gaslight, hansom cab and bustle. *Autre temps Autre mœurs. O tempora, O mores*

BRITISH DECOLONISATION: THE POLITICAL ASPECTS

I have separated the account of British decolonisation into two parts: a part which I called "ethical"—which I dealt with in the last talk—and a part which is this week's theme, which I call "political". I am here referring to the hard facts of power politics, the immediate response to the pressures of the 'fifties. To use the German tag once again, I might say that I'm concerned with *realpolitik*. British disengagement from Africa may be seen, in part, as a response to the stimulus of anti-colonialist pressures, to use the notions of behaviourist psychologists. In the more earthy speech of American political journalism, we might say that the British "gut reaction" to the intensive African nationalist pressures of the mid-fifties was to get up and go. The British were ever a race addicted to the acceptance of facts, to changing situations, and they have prided themselves in an ability to re-adjust themselves to the conditions of change.

Politics, it has been said, should act as a midwife, delivering the next phase of civilisation without destroying the mother. British civilisation has been passed on, warts and all, and the mother herself has been bled, but, generally, unbowed. Like the notorious Abbé Sieyès in the French Revolution, Britain has "survived" the Imperial era. As far as Africa was concerned, the Imperial age was short indeed, a mere eighty years. Yet withdrawal at the end of the 'fifties was not a phased-out process. The timing went to pieces and the withdrawal became at times, perhaps, an undignified rush. Why, we might ask, the haste? Indeed, prior to 1956, estimates as to the length of time that it would take to see the end of African colonialism varied from a few years to the best part of a century. Having lived in East Africa at the time, I can say certainly that European communities were completely unprepared for the challenge to their dominant position, yet by 1960 the end had come.

One hesitates at attributing the winding up of an Empire to one key event, but if I were asked to select one such event I should plump for the Suez expedition of 1956. In 1966 a writer on the problems of the so-called Third World, Professor J. D. B. Miller, said that, "since the Suez failure of 1956 the idea of actively coercing Third World countries seems to have been covertly

dropped by all the major powers, except perhaps China". The Suez invasion of 1956 was a final attempt to solve a colonial problem (for that is what the operation may be reduced to) by force.

The London *Observer* (clearly left-wing on colonial issues) made the point that the danger of the Suez expedition was that it appeared to suggest that "rich" white men tried to force "poor" brown men into certain predetermined courses of action. Many people did not agree, and the *Observer* lost many readers at the time (including myself) for its pains. When it comes to the crunch it takes a very brave man *not* to say "my country right or wrong."

Much British and French thinking regarding decolonisation was hammered out under the stress of Suez. Suez became the stage on which was played out the drama of decolonisation. Both Britain and France were motivated in their dealings with Egypt by considerations that could fairly be described as imperialist. In psychological terms, their unconscious reactions to Nasser were that they regarded him as a rather unpleasant colonial agitator.

The sequence of events in 1956 is well known. In mid '56 Nasser nationalised the Suez Canal after Mr. John Foster Dulles, the U.S. Secretary of State, had refused to permit the supply of capital to build the Aswan Dam. The British and French, together with the Israelis, decided, after a number of secret meetings, on an invasion of Egypt, many of the details of which have now been revealed. Sir Anthony Eden, the British Prime Minister, decided that this was no time for what he saw as Munich-style appeasement. Eden felt that he was, as had happened previously, "Facing the Dictator"; Suez was a repetition of the history of the 'thirties. Crushing Nasser became a crusade for him.

Perhaps the British government of the day saw its rôle as that of policeman in the area, despite its failures in Palestine, Iraq, Jordan and Egypt itself. The attitude of the French was that they had built the canal and the memory of de Lesseps should not be soured by the actions of a few Arabs. Lady Eden had said that she felt that the Suez Canal flowed through her drawing room, but the wives of certain French Cabinet Ministers must have felt the flood also.

Overnight, however, the Suez trio of the British, French and Israelis became drowned in the chorus of world politics. The Americans rejected the war (though severe criticisms have been made of Mr. Dulles by Professor Finer), and the pound, which was at its healthiest since World War II, took a severe "pounding". The Suez crisis was a turning point because the Commonwealth had no independent African members before 1956. In 1957 Ghana became the first decolonised black African State. I would suggest

that there *is* a connection, for in 1958, eighteen months after Suez, a conference of *independent* African States was held in Accra.

The world audience for colonial problems in 1956 consisted mainly of the super-powers, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., but after 1957 the world audience for the colonial powers increased in quantity and volubility as each independent State lent its voice to the clamour for faster decolonisation. Indeed, the last Englishman to see Nasser before the Suez conflict erupted informed the Egyptian ruler that he could not possibly hold out against Britain and France. Nasser replied that he did not intend to, but would stand back and wait for world opinion to save him. Nasser had understood that anti-colonialism was very much "in the air". One of the great features of the Suez campaign is the way in which Nasser kept his nerve while Eden lost his. Even the Americans were puzzled when the British forces withdrew. The methods of gun-boat diplomacy were futile by the mid-twentieth century, but it had taken about half a colonial war to prove it. Moreover, the Arabs had been shown the way to self-respect and had taught African countries how to be sure of themselves.

As far as Britain itself was concerned, Suez touched a deep and vital national nerve. Suez links the British with India, with Disraeli, with the Old Queen herself, and you know what that means. One can never quite forget, though one may not like, Queen Victoria. About this time the very popular, and deservedly so, Goon Show appeared on the B.B.C. Said one Goon to another: "Have a picture postcard of Queen Victoria?" "No thanks", said the other, "I'm trying to give them up!" The British *had* to give up Queen Victoria. Suez was the parting of the waves for the British. It was certainly the "parting of the waves" for the Conservative Party—traditionally the party of the Empire. The party which had gone to war in 1956 behind one leader in order to protect the colonial legacy ranged itself behind a leader whose banner in 1960 was "wind of change".

In late 1956 and early 1957 the die was being cast. The colonial epoch was losing its letters of credit. The British people as a whole were divided, but common patriotism induced them to support the Government. The public opinion polls gave the Government a small majority throughout. The Labour Opposition had a field day, condemning the whole exploit in strong language. Gaitskell, the Labour Party leader, advocated a "Law, Not War" campaign. A mass rally of 30,000 heard Aneurin Bevan at his oratorical polemical best in Trafalgar Square. Strong and highly unparliamentary language was used at protest meetings. The usually composed Mr. Denis Healey (now Labour Minister of Defence) asked one crowd: "What sort of people are you to allow a liar and a cheat to be your Prime Minister?"

The answer to this question, I suppose, is that the British did not know what sort of people they were, or rather they had not the measure of the age into which they were moving. As for the Prime Minister, he departed, and his associate Harold Macmillan muddled effectively through a very trying time both for his party and for the nation. Macmillan's task was to take Britain, and the Conservative Party in particular, from a mental condition of imperialism 1956 variety to the day in spring, 1960, less than four years later, when he told the South African Parliament and the world that Britain accepted the wind of change. In Britain, on the left, there was gloom, not because the Conservatives were in a dilemma, but because they had so much support. Bevan summed up the feelings of the more perceptive members of the party. "If we don't take care", he said, "we shall turn the working class against us. Of course I am against Eden's crazy attempt to put the clock back, but there's no reason why, in attacking the Tories, we should commit ourselves to the view that all United Nations' decisions must be accepted and that all recourse to force must be opposed as aggression. What makes the Labour Party go wrong in foreign affairs", he continued, "is that it takes its policies from middle-class intellectuals, devoid of antennae and with a dreadful habit of falling down and worshipping abstractions. In fact, there is only one motto worse than 'My country right or wrong' and that is 'The United Nations right or wrong'."

Such are the strange ways of politics that the lessons of Suez made their impact not upon the Labour Party in Britain, but upon the Conservatives. In the months that followed, the decision was taken that Britain would have to decolonise. Lancaster House saw comings and goings (prison graduates and Prime Ministers from places not yet born), discussions, meetings, conferences. Constitutions were produced, analysed, dismembered, signed, sealed and delivered to men bearing fly-whips, wearing a fez, dressed in coloured bath robes from all corners of Africa. The British people saw it all on television, when they watched such things, and must have been the first to see an Empire written off, as it were, from an arm chair in the drawing room.

Some people have argued that the British were deceitful dismantlers who destroyed the Empire slowly, "in the dark and by stealth" (to use Sir Roy Welensky's interesting phrase), weeping crocodile tears as they did it. The clue was there for Sir Roy, however. In his book *4,000 Days* he speaks of the Prime Ministers' Conference in 1957 and says, "... our topics included the Middle East (which in the aftermath of Suez bulked very large). . . ." "He noted a growing hostility" "... not only in what was coming to be known as the Afro-Asian *bloc* in the United Nations, but in Britain itself".

In fact, Anglo-Egyptian relations improved quite quickly. In 1959 diplomatic relations were resumed and, as the authoritative Survey of the Royal Institute of International Affairs put it, "At the close of 1959 Nasser's recovery from Suez seemed almost complete." One cannot say this of Britain. Suez became the writing on the wall and Mr. Macmillan read the word "decolonise". Great power politics was a thing of the past. Suez was an attempt at imperialism on the cheap (Mr. Macmillan as Chancellor of the Exchequer set aside £5 million for the venture). Pinch penny imperialism was worse, Mr. Macmillan felt, than no imperialism. The American roving ambassador reported to Washington, "we shall all be fried to a crisp", as he eyed the hovering Soviets. Hence Washington exerted pressure—and the evidence for this is overwhelming—and the colonial age was over.

FRENCH DECOLONISATION: DESCENT TO GRANDEUR

It might be worth considering the attitude of the French President, General de Gaulle, regarding the place of France outside the French Republic. A recent biographer holds that the General blamed France's defeat in 1871 at the hands of Bismarck upon the fact that so many Frenchmen were embroiled in overseas adventures. De Gaulle belongs quite firmly to the "Metropolitan" school which saw French involvement overseas in Madagascar, Ton King and Morocco as a tragic distraction. "France", he is supposed to have said, "always looks towards the Vosges. To distract the troops from that is surely a betrayal of trust".

De Gaulle was thankful enough to use French colonies during the war, but his gaze has always been directed homeward, at Mother France. Perhaps there is, in his devotion to the philosophy of Bergson, a clue to de Gaulle's political thinking. Bergson analysed the uneasiness of the changing reality of life. "It is the nature of the intellect", said he, "to grasp and consider what is constant, fixed and definite; so it tries to avoid what is changing, unstable and divergent". On this analysis it is France which is eternal and unchanging; colonies are the product of the transitory, the ephemeral, the dispensable. Bergson moreover argued that man's mind must acquire intuition, by combining instinct with intelligence.

De Gaulle himself showed his intuition, his own special combination of instinct with intelligence, when, in 1960, he perceived that the French Community (the Gaullist Conception of Empire described in the Constitution of the Fifth Republic) did not satisfy the needs of the countries which, juridically, formed the Community. No one else could have carried out decolonisation with such spectacular speed and smoothness, skirting carefully around

the legal technicalities of his own Constitution to accord full independence to former colonies.

When de Gaulle came to power he showed himself uninterested in the classical dilemma—French Empire, which implied authoritarianism, or French Revolution, with its message of liberty, equality and fraternity. For him the problem to be faced was different in character. He argued that neither the Empire nor the universalist principles of the Revolution were important: only French self-preservation and self-interest were of account. As Algeria appeared to offer no prospects of assisting French self-needs, de Gaulle decided to end the problem. Within three years of his having attained power both the old colonies and the old principles had disappeared.

France has fairly faced up to the problems of decolonisation as far as Africa is concerned (the French do not appear to be so interested any longer in the fate of the Far Eastern Empire). The whole of French West Africa is generously assisted by the French taxpayers, not perhaps always enthusiastically. The economic aftermath of decolonisation has also been fairly faced, and French economic aid for Africa amounts to 6 per cent. of the Budget. The poverty of the former territories is acute. The whole of French West Africa with its population of twenty million was less rich than the former Gold Coast (population about seven million). The British could never quite understand French interest in the deserts of the Sahara. Lord Salisbury said of this interest in 1884: "The cock of Gaul loves scratching in the sand."

In the aftermath of decolonisation the French are paying for their sandy colonial deserts. Far from freeing herself from the financial burden of the colonies, she finds herself giving aid on a far more generous scale to these countries now that they are independent. If this aid is to be effective there must be an economic plan, but to plan you need a single authority, which is of course France. So we are back to colonialism again. The more a thing changes, the more it remains the same.

It would appear, however, that the French ex-colonies in West Africa welcome the close connection between themselves and the metropolitan power. Note, for example, what President Senghor of Sénégal said during a visit to France just after independence. "Educated in your schools, we have become a little like you. . . ." He went on, "France has rediscovered her vocation for liberating, enlightening and helping others. France spends most per head of her population on helping underdeveloped peoples. Sénégal is witness that this help is disinterested. In spite of this effort of unprecedented solidarity, it is France that, of all the great powers, exercises least pressure on us."

Even after French colonial withdrawal, the economic and cultural connection between France and her African territories is stronger than ever. Moreover, the individual States can find no better guide in drawing up their constitutions than imitating those of President de Gaulle's Fifth Republic. They have a preference for the strong presidential type of government, and many constitutions are modelled upon the Fifth Republic itself.

The ex-colonies are all juridically sovereign States, members of the United Nations, but all twelve ex-French West African colonies have actually signed agreements providing for close co-operation with France. The agreements follow similar lines, whether relating to States inside or to those outside the Community. The States agree to co-operate with France in the areas of foreign policy, economic and financial policy and higher education. France trains their armies (Upper Volta is an exception here), and in some cases (Sénégal, Mauritania and Madagascar) permits France the right to station her armed forces in their territories.

France, for its part, gives most generous financial aid and grants preferences to the exports of her former colonies in return for preferential treatment accorded French products. Even more important, France brought her French colonies into association with the Common Market, with its attendant benefits. With profound foresight the French have restricted their personnel in Africa to the rôle of experts and advisers so that the French have never been accused of holding on too long to jobs which Africans have hoped to get. There is, then, close contact between the ex-colonial power and her West African protégés. Withdrawal in the French context has not been withdrawal at all, thanks to the French talent for attracting, I might say hypnotising, the peoples with whom she came into contact.

The grand exception to this rule, however, has been the case of Guinea, which rejected the referendum of 1958 bringing de Gaulle back to power. Following upon de Gaulle's rejection, the new French President decided that if the Guineans wanted disengagement they should have it—lock, stock and barrel. Within days French civil servants withdrew. Out of 4,000 of these civil servants, all but fifteen had gone within three weeks. Cash registers were ripped out, the weapons of the police were withdrawn, and so was the library of the Ministry of Justice. The Governor was instructed to remove the furniture from Government House and to strip all fittings movable and immovable and ship them to France. Telephone wires were removed, fruit trees were cut, gardens decimated, walls torn down, obscene curses scrawled on buildings and a ship bringing five thousand tons of rice was re-routed.

As a result, Touré, already a Marxist, was thrown into the hands of the Communist States. As far as Guinea was concerned, this was an unprofitable exercise, and in May, 1963, de Gaulle agreed to resume technical and financial aid to Guinea, complete with a grant of various credit facilities. The umbilical cord between France and Guinea, so rudely cut in 1958, had been repaired.

The French language is a bond between the ex-colonies of immense importance, so much so that the French territories are frequently described as *Francophone*, which sounds I think like a large and antique musical instrument. De Gaulle is very proud of the fact that a very large part of Africa is *francophone*. Ever since 1960, when almost all of the former French colonies became independent—after the collapse of the "Community" idea of 1958—de Gaulle has taken special pleasure in receiving in Paris with great pomp the presidents of the various new African States. Public buildings in Paris are frequently seen to be flying unfamiliar flags (sometimes the wrong way up) of, say, Dahomey, Upper Volta or Congo (Brazzaville). They come for money (Morocco alone gets \$45 million), technicians and teachers. They get all three.

Looked at in these terms, perhaps one would be wrong to expect drastic change with the granting of independence. France was a monarchy for a thousand years; it has been a republic for ninety-odd, but it is precious close to being ruled by an Emperor today. The Emperor has his Empire, free from Paris protocol and bureaucracy, but enslaved to the philosophy of Sartre and the grandeur of the General. The paradox is that the World's Number One Decoloniser—respected and admired amongst so many of the emirs of emergent Africa from the Cameroons to the Congo—yet he who has the confidence and respect of his pensioners, the ex-colonials.

De Gaulle's aid to underdeveloped Africa has had its critics in France itself. M. Raymond Cartier, a journalist in the periodical *Paris-Match*, has been a constant critic whose criticisms have found a ready ear in many quarters.

In 1963 a government committee which was set up under M. Jeanneney, criticised the deployment of French investment in Africa. Too much, it was argued, went into current spending and not enough into long-term investments. Even in the case of Algeria, it was argued, the French taxpayer was having to support an intolerable financial burden, whereas only months before she had had to support an intolerable military burden.

The total result of France's effort is that, of all the ex-colonial powers, France is the only one which can really claim to be "loved". Tributes to General de Gaulle are almost daily occurrences in French Africa. It's highly significant that, just prior to

the abortive Afro-Asian conference of June, 1965—which was put off because of the *coup d'état* which displaced Ben Bella for Boumedienne—it was suggested that only three non-Afro-Asian guests of honour might be invited: Castro, Tito and—de Gaulle.

The question therefore arises: have the French really withdrawn from Africa? The answer appears to be "no", or at most "hardly". The ideals of assimilation remain long after the transfer of sovereignty. The States continue to model themselves upon France, often to a ludicrous extent. The search for the "black soul" is made in terms of French philosophy. French education, literature and modes of thought remain the formative factors in *francophone* life.

There is little real deviation from French models. The baccalauréat (matriculation and entry to French university) has become, as one Frenchman put it, "the superior fetish, the most powerful of fetishes in modern Africa". Any idea that France is trying to fob the Africans off with something down-graded and inferior is resisted ferociously. To be a man of the Ivory Coast or of Chad is not necessarily more worthwhile than to be a man of France.

French *withdrawal* from Africa may be best summed up in the words of President Léon Mba of the Gabon Republic, who declared on an official state visit to Paris that "Gabon is independent, but between Gabon and France nothing has changed, everything continues as before".

CONGO: KING LEOPOLD'S LEGACY

Congo! The very word itself tends to evoke a chill reaction in many people inside and outside Africa. The name of this benighted country has tended to become the symbol of all that is fearful about emergent Africa.

In 1876 King Leopold II tried to suggest that Belgium should increase her prestige by annexing a colony—but no one was interested. Belgium had herself only fairly recently become an independent State and most Belgians could not see the point of becoming an imperial power, a ruler of others, as it were, on the morrow of her own independence.

King Leopold, whose feelings on this matter weren't influenced by such niceties, simply annexed the Congo as his private kingdom. His regime, which has received a very bad Press, as it were, from historians, caused an international uproar, and in 1908 the Belgian Government, forced by pressure from America and Britain, took over the administration of the territory. From 1908 until 1959 the Belgian population neither knew nor indeed cared much about the Congo.

Belgium had no tradition of empire as had France and Britain, and the Congo was, for most Belgians, merely a sound business venture. Development, it was felt, was going along smoothly and the public and the politicians were content to leave the management of the Congo in the hands of the minister responsible and the Governor-General. During the time of the coalition of the middle fifties a standard Belgian joke was that once a year the Prime Minister would turn to the Minister of the Colonies and say, "How are things with you, Auguste?" to which the Minister would reply, "Going well, Achille, thanks". The Belgians moreover were not an internationally minded power. Created as a State only in 1830, they had no long history of international relations. Brussels had never been a world capital like London or Paris. A very sombre, never a swinging, city.

The Congo was, for the Belgians, a place to visit, to work in and to take back a few Congolese francs (on a par with the Belgian franc). There were 10,000 settlers in the Congo who regarded themselves as permanent residents, but apart from these (and the 7,000 missionaries), non-Congolese were transient and sometimes embarrassed phantoms in the African sun. As late as 1959 the Congo was not an issue in Belgian politics. The Belgian Governor-General Rychmans, who belonged to one of the few "colonial" families, could say: "I am full of hope. Congolese who have travelled elsewhere in Africa find that all in all life at home is best". Much emphasis has been placed upon the Belgian colonial theories as a reason for the Congolese eruption of 1960, but it would appear more feasible to point to Belgian lack of experience in the art of colonial withdrawal.

Above all, the Belgians did not wish to be saddled with an Algeria. On all sides was heard the call "not to soldier for the Congo" as the Belgians considered how best to extricate themselves from their most unwelcome dilemma. Only a very few years before, in 1956, Professor A. A. J. van Bilsen was howled down as he suggested preparing the Congo for independence. By 1960, however, the Belgians were prepared to give the Congolese whatever they asked for. One of the most remarkable conferences of recent times was the so-called Round Table Conference of January-February, 1960. This gathering sat in a tense atmosphere—Lumumba was brought to it from prison—and in the course of that month brought about a reversal in Belgian policy and, what mattered more, a complete change in the relations between Belgians and Congolese. In his opening speech to the delegates, M. Eyskens, the Prime Minister, made it clear that the Belgians were agreed upon "one essential factor—the Congo's independence". The Congolese wanted it at once.

The Belgian conception of disengagement was unsure; they thought they could perhaps disengage in the reverse order to

that of Britain and France. They proposed to grant independence first and hoped to control the situation thereafter. It was clear, says one student of Congolese politics, "that the promise of independence had been won by Belgian weakness rather than by Congolese strength, and that this was by far the most risky grant of independence yet made in Africa".

We know something of the Belgian attitude. Confronted with a situation utterly novel to them, they assumed that the transfer of power was a political formality. The Union Minière and Belgian economic interests would continue unimpaired. At its A.G.M. on 25th May, 1960, at Brussels, no hint that anything amiss was found. What did the ordinary Congolese villager think that *he* would get? One anthropologist who spent nearly a year in a small village in the Kasai just before independence has given us dramatic documentation. Independence would mean "no taxes, increase in salary, ownership of an automobile and the ownership of a house like those occupied by the Belgians. Furthermore, these miracles would appear overnight". The older Congolese feared that their authority would be decreased; the younger Congolese merely wanted the names of the American firms which would send them rifles. Writing in his diary on 19th April, 1960, the anthropologist, Mr. Merriman, concludes, "they visualise independence as something only for themselves, not for the country as a whole . . . it is useless and somewhat specious to talk of peace in a country which is pretty clearly heading for war; what they want is not reassurance and brave talk of peace, but guns".

As if this unpromising picture at the "grass roots" level were not disturbing enough, at the upper reaches of Congolese authority and thought a similar confusion reigned. Nobody had either thought out or indeed was able to give effect to the problem of the sharing of power. There was no clear line dividing separation and federalism even in the minds of those who favoured secession. The Katangese, under their highly capable leader Moise Tshombe, argued that all natural resources were the property of the province; there was talk of some sort of union between Katanga copper and Northern Rhodesia, as it was then. Even the Western-encouraged secession of Katanga, however, did nothing towards thinking out the long-term problem of sharing power; and it is still not clear whether the Congo is a federal State or not.

The outbreak of army mutiny a few days after independence was granted was a crucial factor in the Belgian task of peaceful disengagement. The mutiny could have been suppressed if both Belgian and Congolese authorities had worked together even at a relatively late date in the whole Congo episode. Belgium then was partly unable, partly unwilling to withdraw; Congo authority,

such as it was, was partly unable and partly unwilling to control the fast deteriorating situation . . . in these circumstances it became clear that some outside force must be called in to arbitrate. Kasavubu and Lumumba appealed to the United Nations, which involved incalculable and interminable machinations and the death of the Secretary General of the world body.

Withdrawal on the part of the Belgians led to total and complete collapse because Belgians alone provided the excellent services. No Congolese could run these services. The Congo provided a very high level of administration, in some respects the best in the whole of Africa. Thus African housing in Leopoldville and Elizabethville, now Kinshasa and Lumumbashi, was "lavish" compared with housing in other places, according to the authoritative book on the Congo by Miss Hoskyns. The number of children in primary schools was high, although 50 per cent. of the intake left after two years, and the level of basic literacy was one of the highest in Africa. At the secondary school level the picture was very different. There were, in 1959, no Congolese secondary school teachers, and by 1960 there were twenty Congolese University graduates (from Lovanium University in the Congo), two from Elizabethville and four from universities in Belgium.

It's a moot point whether it is better to turn out a considerable number of university graduates and a proportionately smaller primary and secondary output, or whether the whole effort should be concentrated upon giving all children a basic education. The Belgians chose the latter and, of the total education budget, 65 per cent. was devoted to primary education and teacher-training.

The tragedy of the Belgian withdrawal from the Congo—and this is to be contrasted with the now prolonged, now accelerated disengagement of Britain—is that nobody was prepared for it either psychologically or materially. The Belgians were unable to disengage themselves overnight and they could not envisage the consequences of disengagement. Seven years after the independence of the Congo they are still heavily involved in the Congo's economic life.

For eighty-five years the Congo had been ruled from Brussels. Its immense wealth was developed at enormous effort and cost, both to Congolese and Belgians. All this could not be dismantled overnight without regard to the enormity of what this disengagement meant. A vast territory in the centre of Africa could not be shaken off so easily.

One of the most marked features of the early days after independence was the lack of co-operation between the new Congolese Government and the Belgians. The Belgian news-

paper *la Libre Belgique* appeared, like so many Belgians, to assume that while Belgium had withdrawn from the Congo, they could in a sense return. "Belgium has recognised the independence of the Congo—yes. But not any kind of independence. Not independence in anarchy or disorder." Whereas the British and the French had some understanding of disengagement, the Belgians had not. After all, they were new at the game.

What the Belgians did then was to create an "apparatus"—a form of administration which served to hold the great amorphous area known as the Congo together. Once this was removed, the Congo disintegrated into tribal segments, each producing its own party: thus Abako has been a party of the Bakongo people; MNC—Kalondji, the party of the BaLuba of Kasai and so on.

In 1925 Dr. du Bois wrote, "The Belgian Congo is still a land of silence and ignorance". In 1959 the same thing could be said. After 1960 neither of these facts was quite true. The Congo was not silent and *we* were being forced to learn something of it whether we wanted to or not.

How then did Belgium, compared with the other colonial powers, manage her task of colonial withdrawal? Clearly, Belgium is bottom of the list, France is at the top and Britain sandwiched in between. The French withdraw most effectively because in a sense they have not withdrawn at all. French culture is still the heart of French West Africa. The British gamble with the Commonwealth was at best only a partial success because the new Commonwealth, in African eyes, still smacked too much of the old Empire. Yet the Africans *do* appear to wish to preserve the Commonwealth. The Belgians, however, had the Congo in the back of their minds for the most part, and when they were forced to think about it they cast it out. On the very day that King Baudouin inaugurated independence with the words, "My country and yours will hail this day with joy", signs of the troubles to come were made manifest. Patrice Lumumba, in a speech delivered before the King, hurled a torrent of abuse at Belgian rule. The Congo had been beaten into submission. *This* was the legacy of Leopold. Within days came collapse, mutiny, indiscipline. The Belgians were never interested in the *ultimate* aims of colonial rule. Withdrawal in these circumstances could thus only create a vacuum into which poured the cold war, the speculators and the United Nations.

THE END OF DECOLONISATION

Is the colonial age really over? I am inclined to be doubtful. Of independence I would say, as did the questioner of Lord Tennyson: "What did they *do* with the Holy Grail once they found it,

Mr. Tennyson?" Those who indeed claim to be free of the yoke of colonialism frequently complain nevertheless that it still exists.

I have previously suggested that colonialism does not end merely because one has removed certain very obvious external signs of foreign rule; it does not end with the hauling down of the flag of the colonial power. If colonialism could be ended in this way, then recent political developments in the Congo would be inexplicable. The Congolese did not realise their Golden Age with the departure of the Belgians, as we know to our—and their—cost. The same is true of the Nigerians and the Southern Sudanese, the citizens of Dahomey, the Central African Republic, Togo, Ghana *et al.* Indeed, they may with the long eye of history look back one day, not in anger, but with reflection. The colonial epoch may, in time, be looked upon as a seed-bed time rather than as an era of infertility.

What I have in mind may be illustrated by reference to the ceremony when Queen Elizabeth, as Queen of Canada, and Mr. Richard Nixon, then Vice-President of the U.S.A., together inaugurated the St. Lawrence Waterway. In his speech, which I followed on television, Mr. Nixon said that the British had given two unspeakably precious things to North America—the English language and the Common Law. He spoke not of the Boston Tea Party, nor of the war of 1812, nor of strained relations between Britain and the United States in 1956 at the time of Suez; he spoke of the positive legacy of English colonialism.

Only in the most severely technical sense are nations ever independent: no nation is an economic and cultural island. The notion of independence is unutterably complex. Even the most perceptive of political scientists can be quite astonishingly out of tune with the sounds of the age. In 1951 one of the most distinguished of colonial scholars, Dame Marjery Perham, said: "It is not a very bold speculation to believe that they (the British territories in Africa) may become fully self-governing nation-States by the end of the century". Ten years later few remained which were not fully responsible for their own political destinies. Most of these territories are not, however, what we in the West should recognise as nation-States. States have been created, but not nations. Their most evident characteristic is poverty, but in this case politics has led economics. What does impress the observer is the continuing dependence, in real terms, upon the former colonial power. The best example is that of the *franco-phone* States of French West Africa, whose dependence upon France, economically, culturally (in a very special sense) and militarily, is as great as ever. Even in the case of the Congo, the attempt to break the links with the former colonial power is a long-continuing and clearly bitter process.

What has changed, of course, is the fact that the ex-colony now takes its own sovereign decisions. Every new State likes to feel that it does have this power to make decisions, even if the decision-making power is in the hands of an *élite*. Sensitivities on this score are very great, as the whole Congo operation has shown. "Touchiness" has been very much a part of the whole unhappy Congo saga, from the moment in 1960 when Lumumba appeared on the scene to the expropriation of the copper resources of the Union Minière in early 1967. The whole decolonisation movement therefore appears to be little more than a change of emphasis, hardly even a change of direction over the past decade. Set in this way, the claims of some African apologists do appear grandiose, to put it mildly. Leopold Senghor, for example, asked: "For what should our final aim be but to create the civilisation of the universal for which all men and all continents must strive, otherwise it will not come into existence?" We must discount much of this as good old-fashioned French universalist rhetoric.

Everybody claims to be speaking for truth, justice and civilisation, but it doesn't require a Socrates to see that much of this is special pleading. The colonialists were neither ogres nor saints, neither real nor paper tigers. The emancipated powers are not avenging angels, and those who have been claiming such status have been rudely disabused by their own peoples. We've seen the reduction of a Redeemer, the kicking out of a Kabaka, the axing of an abbé and the booting of a Ben.

Certainly the more one considers the matter, the more clear it becomes that it is wrong to see a simple dichotomy between pre-colonial and post-colonial phases in recent African politics. The fundamental change may come about in a territory's development either before or after the single act of colonial renunciation. Thus in the case of Algeria, for example, the advent of de Gaulle to power was decisive. Had the General not returned to power in 1958 the subsequent pattern of an independent French Africa would have been entirely different.

African development neither began nor ended with the lowering of the Union Jack or the Tricolor. As far as Africans themselves are concerned, there have been two distinct phases in the last fifteen years during which the number of independent States has grown from three to thirty-eight. Firstly, in the honeymoon of independence—in some cases a very brief ecstasy—came the sudden emergence of the one-party State, but the fact remains that its main deficiency has lain in its inability to provide for peaceful changes in the personnel of government. The danger point came, and has yet to come in many cases, when party rifts developed and the leadership was challenged. In both Ghana and Uganda cleverly organised plots were secretly hatched, and

in the former case the Head of State was most ingeniously disposed of in his absence.

The second phase has involved military rule, a phenomenon long common to Latin America and now all too evident in modern Africa. The Mobutus, the Boumediennes, the Gowans, the Ankrahs, are the new men of Africa. Seeing the signs, men like Nyerere and Sekou Touré, though "mere" politicians, have attempted to come to terms with the problems of the one-party State by allowing a greater degree of flexibility within the party itself.

Nobody could have foreseen these developments at the moment when the trappings of colonial rule were removed. The British fondly hoped that the colonies would adopt the Westminster model, but this expectation was hardly fulfilled. The concept of a clear-cut division between Government and Opposition, with its gentlemanly assumptions about what is and is not parliamentary, never materialised. Such notions of government are largely out of place in the torrid air of tropical Africa. Indeed, even in Britain itself the House of Commons, in Mr. Crossman's words, has "surrendered most of its effective powers to the Executive and has become a passive forum in which the struggle was fought between the modern usurpers of parliamentary power, the great political machines". In other words, the assumptions made even by the expatriate British about their own constitution were wrong. Small wonder, then, that a nineteenth century conception of parliamentary government would not fit present-day Africa.

It has not nevertheless been easy for Africans to claim that colonialism has been banished from their States. There are two points which might be worth considering in this connection. First must be mentioned the question of poverty. Because Africa is poor it is consequently open to outside influences, unless, in a fit of foolish exasperation, foreign assets are nationalised, à la Nyerere. In Europe and America political power has been most commonly based on economic power, so that in order to influence the former one had to influence the latter. In Africa political power has not grown out of wealth which, for the most part, has been in foreign hands—banks, insurance, minerals and all sorts of technical equipment and technicians. For this reason some of the freedom of action of the newly-independent governments has been inhibited.

A second interesting development was made clear to me recently when I was speaking to a consul of the United States of America. He told me that he wanted an assistant to tour the territory to see people and understand what was going on. I

immediately thought of the old District Commissioner on safari, a type I had known in East Africa in the days of British colonial rule. In truth, the new approaches were not fundamentally different from the old and the new man was being forced to go back to the time-honoured method of the colonial safari. Once again is suggested the French saying: *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*.

Hence, then, it is clear that the removal of political control from outside is only half the story. Both the poverty of the developing nations as well as their inability to create new *social* institutions have been a handicap to the development of something really new. The Roman Empire, we might recall, provided law, language, roads and government, in a word, *expertise*, for their colonies; the same might be said of the British and French in their colonies. Perhaps in a thousand years people in Africa might be happy to announce their debt to the now reviled colonial powers, just as nations now compete to be regarded as inheritors of the mantle of Rome.

All developments, however, have hit the resident European in Africa. Algeria is a case in point. Because of the general insecurity there in 1962, it was decided to evacuate the women and the children as a purely temporary measure. Gradually, however, most of the men decided to leave. Rather than die for French Algeria, most of them simply decided in the end to join their families in France. By May, 1962, Europeans were leaving Algeria at the rate of 10,000 a day. One-third of the total of Europeans had left by the end of June, 1962. The age of the "colon" was over. The Algerian case is one to ponder; it's an interesting example of how a non-African group reacts under the stress of the decolonisation process. Algerian Frenchmen, so we see, decided to "*chercher la femme*".

I have been impressed, in this survey of colonial withdrawal, by the fact that each nation has its own way of doing things. The French have certainly been the most successful decolonisers—which may afford them some consolation for their setbacks at the hands of the British in the 1880's—the Belgians have been the worst decolonisers, and the British have had mixed fortunes. Perhaps all this reflects what philosophers might recognise as British empiricism—the British way of doing things by muddling through—Belgian Platonism—building a class of *élite* Africans—and French Cartesianism—colonialisation by definition from Paris. Such diversity may, however, have a unity. The unity is the vitality and inventive fertility of Europe. With the colonial age at least nominally over, it is the E.E.C. Common Market which, as the most recent political device, currently absorbs the attention of the ex-colonial powers. The old colonies are once again look-

ing to Europe and eagerly accept associate membership of the E.E.C. The doughty old empire builder no doubt would not be too displeased with this, for if withdrawal was necessary it is not perhaps without some historic irony that so many States should seek a voluntary link with old mother Europe.